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Security Council

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Letter dated 6 September 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication dated 30 August 2012, which I received from the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

12-50224 (E) 140912

Please recycle

Annex

Letter dated 30 August 2012 from the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 2011 (2011), I attach a report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force covering the period from 1 May to 31 July 2012 (see enclosure). I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Anders Fogh **Rasmussen**

Enclosure

Quarterly report to the Security Council on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force

Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to the request under Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 2011 (2011), informs the United Nations on the progress of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), covering the period from 1 May to 31 July 2012. As at 31 July 2012, total ISAF strength stood at 130,697 personnel provided by all 28 NATO countries and 22 non-NATO countries. NATO and ISAF reiterate their invitation to additional United Nations Member States to support this United Nations-mandated mission by providing advisers and trainers for the Afghan National Security Forces and to increase their funding support to the Afghan security forces and their support for the civilian sectors of governance and development.

2. Throughout the reporting period, ISAF continued to assist the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. From 1 May to 31 July 2012, ISAF suffered 1,591 casualties including 104 killed in action, 1,481 wounded in action and 6 non-battle-related deaths.

3. During this reporting period, the number of reported security incidents was in keeping with seasonal trends. Insurgent-initiated attacks[a] increased slightly each month this quarter, although the general trend was comparable to 2011. The slight increase in insurgent-initiated attacks was principally in southern Afghanistan, where the 10 most violent districts in the country generated 45 per cent of nationwide insurgent-initiated attacks. The rise in the number of those attacks was attributed mainly to a shortened poppy harvest, an earlier seasonal pre-Ramadan rise in insurgent activity, improved reporting of attacks against the Afghan security forces, and the high operational tempo maintained by the Afghan and ISAF forces. Insurgent-initiated activity focused on attempted assassinations of Government and security force officials, in order to undermine their effectiveness. Despite the media attention given to some of the high-profile attacks,[b] they have been assessed by ISAF as operational failures. The Afghan security forces' reaction to the attacks, which was fast and adequate, received positive media coverage.

4. Noteworthy events for this reporting period include:

(a) On 13 May, President Karzai made the announcement of those districts and provinces that would be part of tranche 3 of the transition. The three tranches now comprise 260 districts and include all provincial capitals. Once tranche 3 is fully implemented, 75 per cent of the Afghan population will live in areas where the Afghan security forces have the lead responsibility for security;

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[a] Enemy-initiated attacks have been renamed insurgent-initiated attacks for this report. No definitions have been changed. Insurgent-initiated attacks comprise insurgent action (insurgent-initiated direct fire, indirect fire, surface-to-air fire) and explosive hazard events, including executed attacks only (explosions of improvised explosive devices/mine strikes).

[b] Like the attack on forward operating base Salerno in Khost Province, Regional Command East, on 1 June 2012, and the attack on 22 June 2012 on the Spochmai Hotel in Kabul.

(b) On 13 May, the Afghan-ISAF-Pakistan Tripartite Commission met in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, to discuss cooperation and coordination along the border. This was the first meeting of the Tripartite Commission since June 2011;

(c) On 20 and 21 May, during the NATO Summit in Chicago, ISAF troop-contributing countries underlined that the ISAF mission will terminate at the end of 2014 but reaffirmed their close partnership with Afghanistan beyond the transition period, recalling the firm mutual commitments made between the broader international community and Afghanistan at the Bonn Conference on 5 December 2011. The International Conference on Afghanistan held in Tokyo on 8 July was the next international meeting to deliver concrete commitments to the promise of the long-term partnership made at Bonn. At Tokyo the international community committed US $16 billion for the period 2012-2015 and to sustain support "at or near levels of the past decade" until the end of 2017;

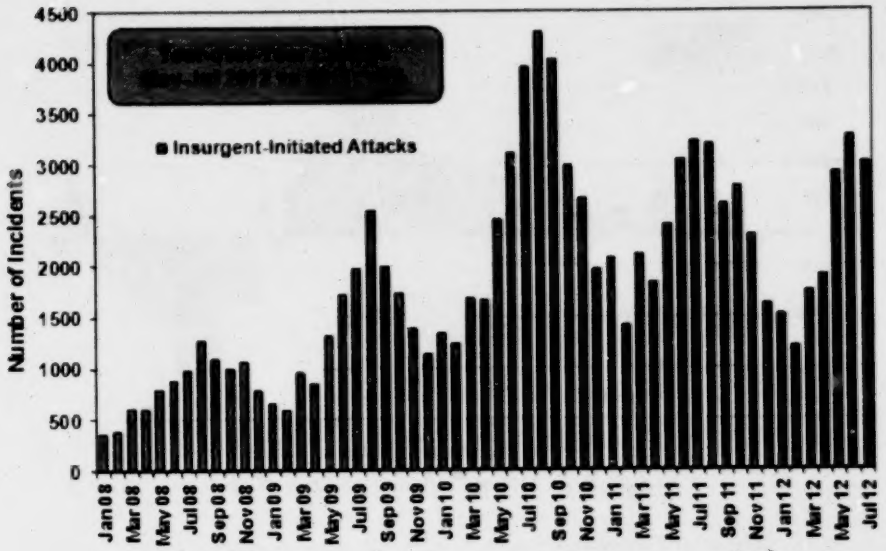
(d) On 14 June, the "Heart of Asia" Ministerial Conference convened in Kabul. The Conference was attended by 28 ministerial and high-level delegations from Heart of Asia and supporting countries, including 11 delegations from regional and international organizations. NATO was represented by the NATO senior civilian representative in Kabul. The Conference was the first follow-up meeting to advance the Istanbul process, intended to strengthen regional dialogue on Afghanistan, develop confidence-building measures among Heart of Asia countries and coordinate various regional cooperation efforts on key economic, political and security issues. In spite of significant threat streams, the Afghan security forces, in close coordination with ISAF, ensured that the proceedings concluded without incident;

(e) On 4 July, Pakistan reopened the supply lines into Afghanistan after the United States issued an expression of regret for the accidental death of 24 Pakistani soldiers in an airstrike along the Afghan-Pakistani border in November 2011. The agreement ended a seven-month political stalemate that forced ISAF troop-contributing countries to use alternative logistical routes, although with minimal operational impact.

Security situation

5. During this reporting period, insurgent-initiated attacks increased by 6 per cent compared to the same period in 2011. Insurgents' efforts to maintain operations with high-profile attacks and assassinations were largely ineffective because Afghan security force and ISAF operations continued to interdict the insurgents. As a result of the improved effectiveness of the Afghan security forces, the insurgency did not regain lost territory and the majority of Afghans remained unaffected by insurgent violence.[c]

[c] A total of 80 per cent of the Afghan population does not directly experience the violence associated with the insurgency.

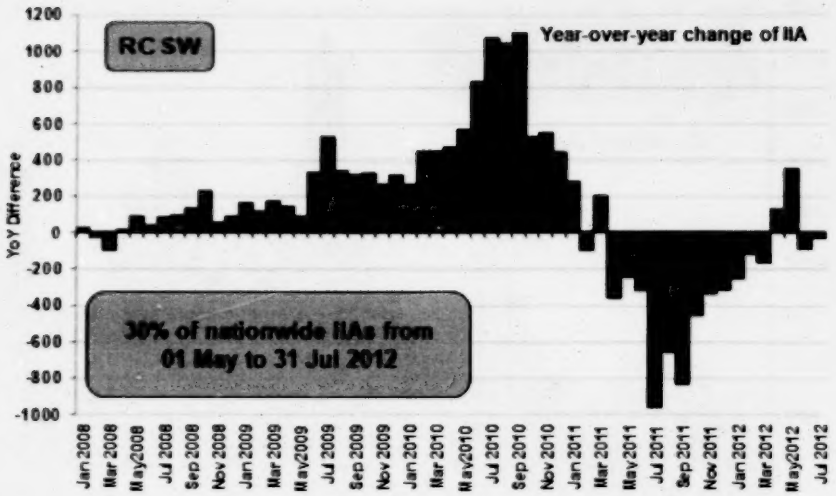


6. The insurgency continued to rely on indirect fire and the use of improvised explosive devices, trying to avoid direct engagement. The assassination attempts against Government officials remain another tactic of choice, in order to disrupt the Government's ability to carry out effective governance and to discredit it. During the reporting period, the majority of insurgent-inflicted civilian casualties (58 per cent) were caused by improvised explosive devices. The percentage of such devices found and cleared as opposed to detonated involuntarily was approximately 60 per cent.

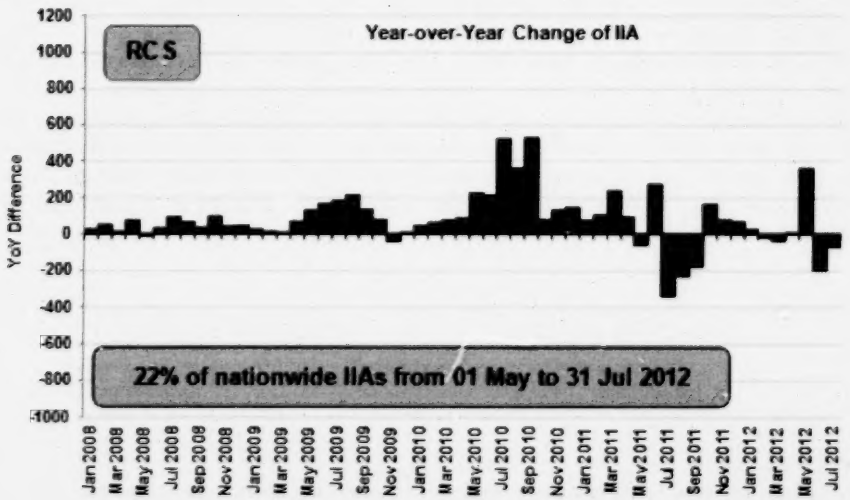
7. Regionally, the security situation can be described as follows:[d]

(a) **Regional Command Southwest.** Insurgent-initiated attacks for the reporting period increased by 13 per cent compared to the same period in 2011. The end of the poppy harvest, the period from late May to early June, witnessed an immediate increase in insurgent-initiated attacks, followed by a minor drop in such attacks at the beginning of Ramadan in July. Two factors will need to be closely monitored during the next reporting period: the reduction of the surge forces in Regional Command Southwest, and the impact of an early Ramadan which could be followed by a longer insurgent fighting season before the effects of winter reduce insurgent operations. The central Helmand River Valley will remain important to the insurgents who will continue to contest it with both ISAF and the Afghan security forces.

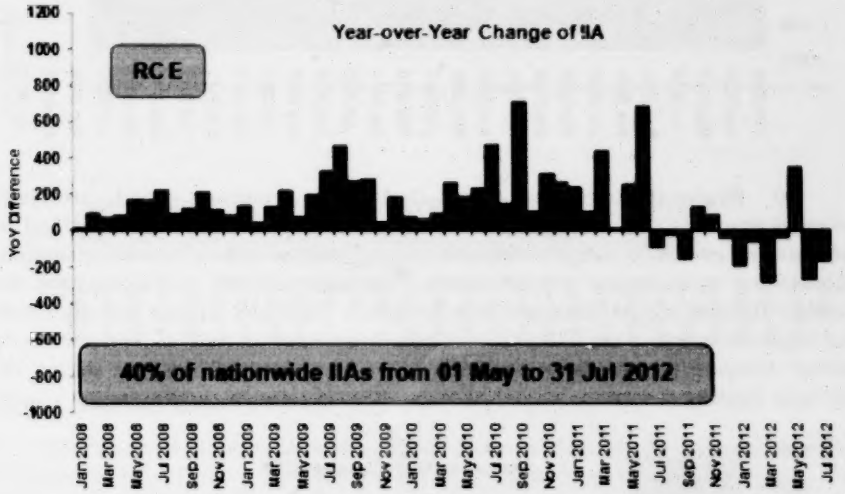
[d] Graphics are available on the ISAF webpage, at www.isaf.nato.int/article/news/monthly-trends.html.



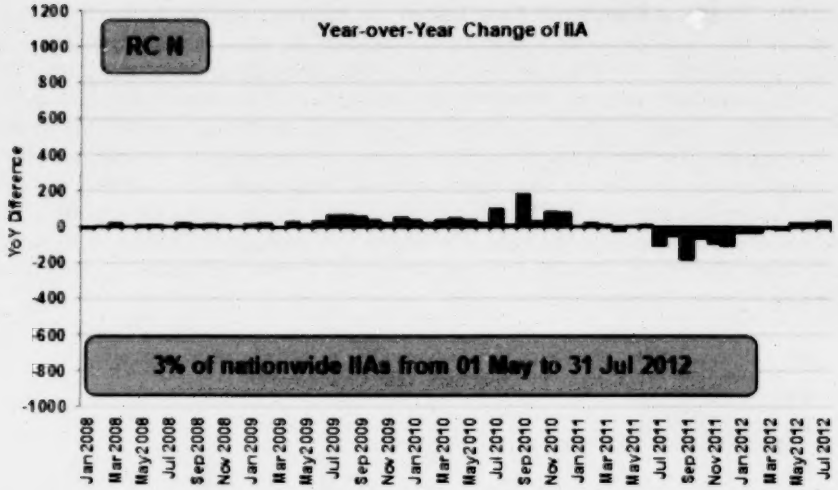
(b) **Regional Command South.** Insurgent-initiated attacks for the reporting period increased by 6 per cent compared to the same period in 2011. It is assessed that this increase is in part the result of insurgent attempts to negate losses in their Pashto homeland during 2011. Conversely, the number of improvised explosive devices found and cleared has increased in Regional Command South over the previous three months. As in neighbouring Regional Command Southwest, the impact of a longer post-Ramadan insurgent fighting season and the reduction of surge forces remains to be seen. The insurgents continue to target the Government and the Afghan security forces to undermine the confidence of the local population in the institutions and attack the Afghan local police, which helps to prevent insurgent access to this population. Improvised explosive devices continue to be the primary means of engagement to minimize insurgent losses, followed by direct fire attacks.



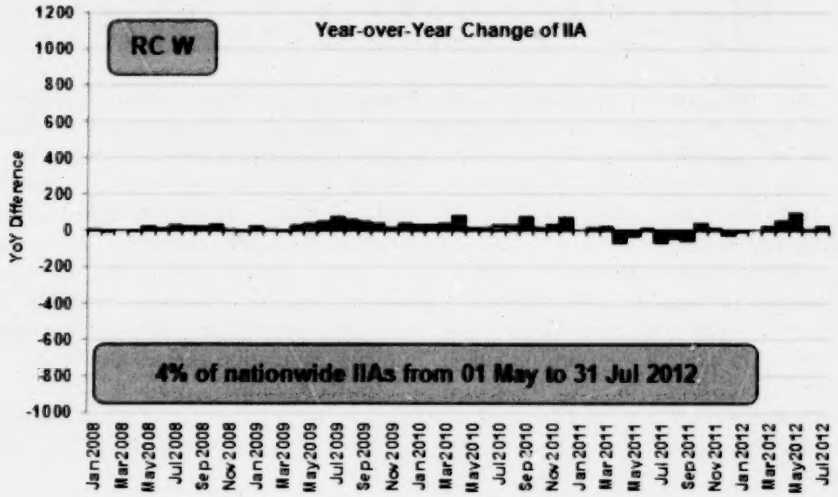
(c) **Regional Command East.** During the reporting period, the most densely populated area in Afghanistan witnessed a 2 per cent decrease in insurgent-initiated attacks compared to the same period in 2011. The security incident trend for this reporting period mirrored the trend in the same period in 2011 and continues to be influenced by focused Afghan security force and ISAF operations, particularly in the border regions. The border regions of Regional Command East remain the most challenging areas and can be considered to be the main source of instability for the region. Insurgents exploit their freedom of movement and maintain the capability to plan and execute attacks in the area. The insurgency in Regional Command East is much more dispersed; individual insurgent groups follow their own agendas and have close links to organized crime in the border region.



(d) **Regional Command North.** During the reporting period, insurgent-initiated attacks increased by 29 per cent compared to the same period in 2011. While the insurgency has been unable to sustain a significant level of effort within the area of operations of Regional Command North when compared to other regional commands, there has been a slight increase in insurgent effectiveness during the current reporting period compared to the same period in 2011. The insurgency, more ethnically diverse and more closely linked to criminal organizations than in other regional commands, retains a limited capability to conduct attacks in northern Afghanistan but is still present and active. Insurgents continued to attempt high-profile attacks in major population centres attempting to reverse perceptions of security gains. Insurgents avoided sustained direct fire engagements with ISAF and focused on Afghan security force personnel as a means to undermine Government security and disrupt the development of the security forces.

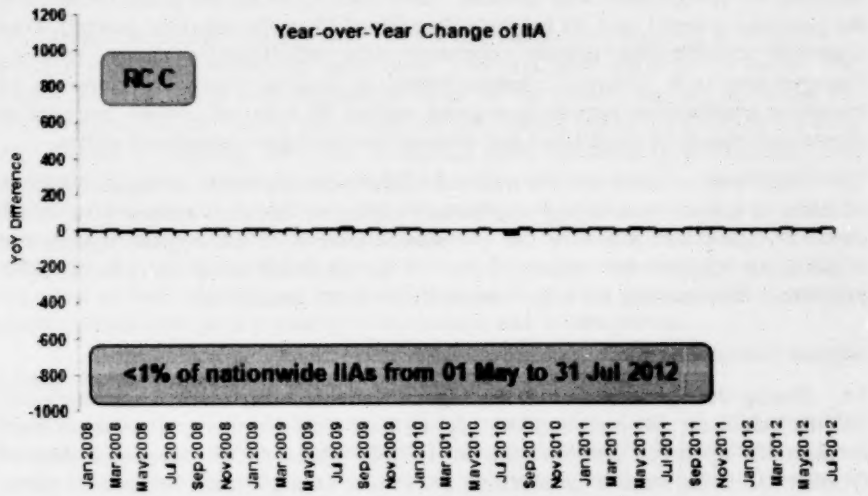


(e) **Regional Command West.** During the reporting period, insurgent-initiated attacks increased by 46 per cent compared to the same period in 2011. This increase in events is largely because of aggressive ISAF security operations encroaching on insurgent support zones, continued narcotic trafficking, and the summer fighting season. Insurgent attacks against ISAF and Afghan security forces and logistical convoys are likely to continue, throughout the west of Afghanistan, to disrupt freedom of movement and attempt to regain strongholds lost during the previous fighting season.



(f) **Regional Command Capital.** During this reporting period insurgent-initiated attacks in Regional Command Capital decreased by 22 per cent compared to the same period in 2011 because of the improved capacity of the Afghan security forces and effective security measures within Kabul Province. The attack on the

"Green Village" in Kabul on 2 May 2012 and the assassination of Arsala Rahmani, a former Taliban minister and key member of the Afghanistan High Peace Council, were the most significant events in this period. It is likely that Kabul Province will continue to be the target of numerous high-profile attack attempts during this fighting season because of the significant media and political attention such attacks receive.



Afghan National Security Forces

8. Over the past three months, the Afghan National Security Forces have steadily increased in overall force size and remain on track to meet the approved goal of a final strength of 352,000 by October 2012. This strength target is intended to provide security for all of Afghanistan by the end of 2014 and is designed to permit the consolidation of ISAF gains and to fully enable a successful transition to Afghan-led security.

9. Improvements have been made in the level of cooperation between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence in the fields of logistics and convoy execution. The quality and competence of the Afghan security forces continue to improve steadily; significant enabler support from international forces is still required, however. Partnered operations put pressure on traditional insurgent facilitation routes, while a sustained presence degrades the insurgents' ability to resupply.

10. The first Afghan security force campaign plan developed by Afghans (Operation Naweed 1391) is currently in progress and a planning cycle has commenced for the next year. During this planning cycle, responsibility will transition from the General Staff to the new operational-level Ground Force Command once it achieves its full operational capability, which is expected in October 2012.

11. Attrition and the shortage of non-commissioned officers remain challenging for both services but efforts are being made to reduce the shortfalls. These efforts include the special leave travel programme established to facilitate movement by air

of Afghan security force personnel on leave, from designated combat zones (South, Southwest and West) to and from Kabul.

12. The percentage of Afghan security force units rated as "effective with partners" or greater has increased since January 2012 from 52 per cent to 82 per cent for Afghan National Army battalions and headquarters and from 58 per cent to 60 per cent for Afghan National Police units. The numbers of most effective units assessed as "independent with advisers" have risen to 30 for the Army (from 15 in the previous quarter), and 49 for the police (from 35 in the previous quarter). Four operation coordination centres improved their effectiveness status, reaching "independent with advisers", demonstrating a positive trend. Development of operation coordination centres is ongoing and all 40 required centres (regional or provincial) should be established and assessed during future assessment cycles.

13. ISAF will continue to work with the Afghan security forces to improve Afghan enablers (logistics, countering improvised explosive devices, aviation) to match capability gaps and prioritize the professionalization of the Afghan police, and continue to support the security forces in geographical areas of reduced ISAF presence, while meeting the requirements of the ISAF drawdown.

Afghan National Army

14. During the reporting period, the Afghan National Army reached approximately 185,000 members, not including the Afghan Air Force. The Army remains on track to meet the approved authorization of 187,000 ahead of the scheduled date of October 2012. To reach a balanced force, soldier strength must be reduced while increasing the number of non-commissioned and other officers.

15. The newly formed Special Operations Command division of the Afghan Army, a force of approximately 10,000 personnel, provides a distinctive capability that serves both as a command and a staff for a unique, enduring and elite military organization. On 25 July the Special Operations Command executed its first all-Afghan full mission exercise in preparation for a night operation. The Afghans planned and prepared the operation and Afghan helicopter crews flew the Afghan special operators and a small number of ISAF mentors to their objective.

16. The NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan, in cooperation with the Afghan Ministry of Defence, continues its efforts to professionalize the force, diminish the leadership shortfalls, decrease the attrition rates, and improve staff planning, tactical coordination, and the logistical capabilities of the Afghan Army.

Afghan Air Force

17. Over the past nine months the Afghan Air Force has made marginal gains in its force strength, reaching 5,933 personnel late in July 2012. The authorized force strength of the Afghan Air Force is 8,067 by 2017. Owing to the technical skills required throughout the Air Force, and to human capital restraints, it will continue to grow slowly. To this end, important investments are required to improve Air Force training sites and infrastructure. Consequently, the Afghan Air Force will remain dependent on donor countries and other support until it achieves full operational capability by 2017.

Afghan National Police

18. During this reporting period, the Afghan National Police reached approximately 147,000 members. The reduced growth rate was a result of a cessation in recruiting in favour of balancing the structure of policemen and non-commissioned officers within the force. However, the current growth and attrition rates indicate that the police are likely to achieve the October 2012 target of 157,000.

19. Trends in the assessment ratings of the Afghan police continued to be positive, showing increased numbers of units rated "effective with advisers" or better. The Afghan security forces will continue to focus on the police, and are preparing for 2013 being styled the Year of the Police. As the Afghan police are close to reaching their requested manning, the focus is shifting from recruiting to professionalizing the existing force through advanced training and promotion standardization. Training development is evolving and the number of Afghan instructors trained is increasing steadily (66 per cent of the positions are filled and 81 per cent of those instructors are trained). Afghan perceptions of the police appear to have generally improved as well, showing an increased awareness of their presence and generally positive trends in regard to their professionalism and independence.

Afghan Public Protection Force

20. The Ministry of the Interior approved a transition plan for the Afghan Public Protection Force to carry out Presidential Decree 62 beyond 20 March 2012 without any security gaps. The plan granted interim risk management company licences to 31 private security companies. These licences allow such companies to continue to provide security while their contracts are still under negotiation.

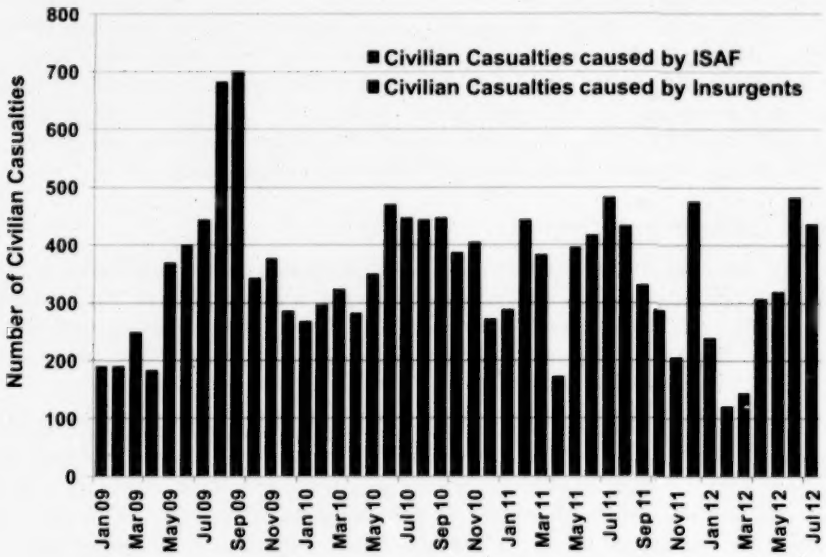
21. An interim risk management company is a continuation of the private security company. Upon transition to a permanent risk management company status, the guards will transition to the Afghan Public Protection Force. In the meantime guards will continue to be uniformed as with the private security companies. While existing guards were brought on through a private security company vetting process, they will complete the regular Ministry of the Interior selection process during the transition to the protection force. Because the interim licence period is not sufficient to finalize all contract negotiations, the Ministry will allow the affected companies to continue until their contract is concluded. The Public Protection Force is working with interim risk management companies that failed to meet their transition deadlines set by the Ministry to extend deadlines so that requirements for the transition can be completed. The Ministry ordered the provincial chiefs of police not to take any actions against private security companies without first consulting it. To avoid further extension of the interim licences ISAF recommended a condition-based interim licence period rather than a date-based period.

Civilian casualties

22. Civilian casualties are of great concern to ISAF, and the need to effectively manage the consequences of such incidents is considered to be critically important. ISAF has been successful at reducing civilian casualties, and continues to emphasize adherence to the Directives of the Commander of ISAF to avoid future civilian casualties. In the period from 1 January to the end of July 2012, reduction efforts

produced a 51 per cent reduction in ISAF-caused civilian casualties compared to the same period in 2011.

23. Reporting for the current quarter indicates that the insurgents are responsible for causing approximately 87 per cent of all civilian conflict-related deaths and more than 92 per cent of all incidents with related civilian casualties. ISAF was identified as having responsibility for 8 per cent of all such incidents, including the responsibility for 13 per cent of civilian conflict-related deaths. The figures reported in the chart reflect incidents of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and wounded) that have been confirmed through investigation to have been caused by either ISAF or insurgents. ISAF policy requires all credible allegations of civilian casualties to be reviewed.[c]



Counter-narcotics

24. ISAF continues, in conformity with its mandate, to provide support to the counter-narcotics programmes and operations of the Government of Afghanistan in order to disrupt, neutralize and influence the narcotics industry and its funding of the insurgency in Afghanistan.

25. Since the conclusion of the poppy harvest in the major producing areas, poor opium yields have been reported in Helmand, Uruzgan, Kandahar, Farah, Nimroz and Nangarhar. The poor crop resulted from the shifting of poppy cultivation to areas with poor growing conditions, undesirable weather for cultivation, and poor farming practices by new, inexperienced poppy farmers. Opium prices have increased slightly as a result of a decrease in the opium yield, but not as dramatically as the price increase resulting from the 2010 poppy blight.

[c] Graphics are available on the ISAF web page, at www.isaf.nato.int/article/news/monthly-trends.html.

26. Afghan security force and ISAF operations in key narcotics processing and trafficking areas in southern Afghanistan have limited some narcotics movement and increased the risks associated with narcotics trafficking. In addition, during this reporting period, particularly during the month of May, substantial narcotics seizures were made by the Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan, which included over 19,000 kg of opium and 550 kg of heroin in the months of May and June alone.

27. A decrease in harvest output along with ongoing counter-narcotics and counter-insurgency operations presents an opportunity to pressure insurgent funding streams. Continuing to limit the freedom of movement of narcotic traffickers will increase the risks associated with trafficking, which will result in a depression of opium prices. This could be one reason why opium prices have only marginally increased, instead of spiking as in 2010. Furthermore, the inherent risks associated with a poor crop and depressed prices will aid in any campaign to deter poppy cultivation.

Governance

28. ISAF continues to provide support to Afghan-led governance efforts, particularly in key areas of transition, reintegration, counter-corruption and rule of law improvement.

29. Security responsibility continues to be transitioned from ISAF to the Afghan security forces and, as the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police develop, they are taking an increasing lead in conducting security operations. One important indicator of the success of the transition is the 15 per cent decline in insurgent-initiated attacks on average year over year in tranche 1 and 2 areas. As the transition continues, planning for the period beyond 2014 develops and work has been done to synchronize understanding of the campaign between ISAF, Afghan security ministries, non-security ministries, the Afghan security forces and the international community.

30. The Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme is still encountering challenges, but has seen improvements in implementation capacity in the past quarter. However, provincial joint secretariat teams are still in need of support and the joint secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme and ISAF are working to address this through mentoring and formal training. As at 31 July 2012, the Peace and Reintegration Programme had officially reintegrated a total of 5,036 insurgents. This represents an increase of around 1,000 persons reintegrated over the previous quarter.

31. Formal reintegration has contributed stabilizing effects in the north and west, where the programme has had most success. Encouraging progress has been noticed recently in the east, south and south-west, but it is more likely that informal reintegration occurs in those regions because of a lack of security in some areas, fear of Taliban retaliation for reintegrating, and cultural, honour-based sensitivities. A Joint Ministerial Order issued in June directed the Afghan security forces to support and promote the Peace and Reintegration Programme. Consequently, training measures were implemented in order to spread awareness of the Programme.

32. Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr provide an opportunity for the Government of Afghanistan to leverage a cultural and religious event to provide reintegration

impact on a national level. Also at this level, a National Peace and Unity Week is planned for September 2012 with a range of Afghan-led countrywide events to demonstrate the Government's commitment.

33. The NATO-led building integrity initiative continues to develop the capabilities of the Afghan Ministries of Defence and the Interior to support the Afghan security forces. For the period 2012-2014, priority will be given to the planning and management of financial and human resources. This work will be taken forward in the framework of the Enduring Partnership. The building integrity group continued its work with the NATO Training Mission on reviewing the integration of appropriate courses for the security forces in order to ensure the integration of good governance and anti-corruption practice and process. On 26 July, President Karzai issued a Presidential Decree that focuses on improving governance and tackling corruption. The Decree reflects the President's stated determination to address these issues.

34. The NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission continues to work with the Government to improve the provision of State justice with qualified personnel at the provincial and district levels. The support mission also continues to assist the Afghans in countering threat networks through the development of Afghan forensics and biometrics capabilities.

Development

35. Together with the transition implementation in the provinces, the provincial reconstruction teams are in the process of transferring their functions to the Government and channelling enduring assistance through the Government or traditional development actors (international and non-governmental organizations and the private sector). The countries providing the teams agreed on a set of principles for the evolution and ultimate dissolution of their teams, many of which are already evolving, shifting their focus from direct delivery to enhancing the effectiveness of Afghan national and provincial government structures. By the time transition is complete, all teams will have handed over their functions to the Government, traditional development actors, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, and will have been phased out. Pursuing this process, one team closed during the reporting period (United States team Laghman) and four more could close in 2012. As at the end of the reporting period, 25 provincial reconstruction teams remain operating in Afghanistan, but all will be transferred by the end of 2014.

Children affected by armed conflict

36. ISAF stays committed to its support for monitoring and reporting violations against children by armed actors, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1612 (2005). ISAF and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan have jointly taken several practical steps to support Afghan institutions in implementing an action plan to stop and prevent grave violations of children's rights, including actions to prevent underage recruitment to the Afghan security forces, sexual abuse and killing and maiming of children.

Resolution 1325 (2000) and gender perspective

37. The implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) is still an ISAF priority internally as well as externally. ISAF focuses on establishing more concrete policies and guidelines through standard operating procedures and fragmentary orders and on increasing awareness through standardized in-theatre training.

38. ISAF continues to monitor and support the Government of Afghanistan in creating a more gender-sensitive environment. Although there is a growing recognition for female roles in the Afghan security forces, women account for roughly 1 per cent of the total force. As at 20 June 2012, there were 1,409 women members in the Afghan police, 379 in the Afghan Army and 27 in the Afghan Air Force. The Government has established target numbers (to be reached by the end of 2015) for women members of the security forces but there are still obstacles to be overcome before the objectives will be met. These challenges are on the one hand of a material and structural nature but on the other hand they are also of a cultural nature. In the police force, women's training and participation is often not valued, their presence is deemed pointless, and consequently they are marginalized and relegated to non-police work.

39. ISAF continues its proactive work towards the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), and welcomes the continued efforts of the international community to encourage the Government to integrate the gender perspective as a natural part of the social and political environment in Afghanistan. Although the political and social representation of women increased, their effective participation in political processes and economic activities remains limited. Furthermore, violations of women's rights remain prevalent despite existing legislation, while women's access to education and health services remains low.